

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ARIZONA ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS TASK FORCE

**December 14, 2006
1:15 p.m., MST**

The Arizona English Language Learners (ELL) Task Force met at the Westin La Paloma Resort at 3800 East Sunrise Drive in Tucson, Arizona. Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 1:17 p.m., MST.

1. Call to Order

Present:

Mr. Alan Maguire, Chairman
Dr. John Baracy
Mr. Jim DiCello
Dr. Eugene Garcia
Ms. Margaret Garcia Dugan
Ms. Anna Rosas

Absent:

Ms. Johanna Haver
Ms. Eileen Klein
Ms. Karen Merritt

A quorum was present for the purpose of conducting business.

2. Presentation and discussion of the responsibilities of the Arizona English Language Learners Task Force activities including the development and adoption of models of Structured English Immersion programs for use by school districts and charter schools

Chairman Alan Maguire began his remarks by stating that this Task Force meeting was intended to present information about the work of the English Language Learners Task Force to English Language Learner (ELL) practitioners attending the IDEAL conference in Tucson, and to provide an opportunity for the ELL practitioners to address the Task Force. Chairman Maguire reviewed key points of the comprehensive ELL legislation that became state law in 2006. The new law replaces some existing ELL Statutes, establishes the ELL Task Force, establishes the Arizona Structured English Immersion Fund, provides for Annual Assessment of ELL students, provides for 2 year monitoring of former ELL students, requires the State Board of Education to prescribe Structured English Immersion (SEI) endorsements, establishes the Statewide Compensatory Instruction Fund, provides for ADE monitoring of local ELL programs, and miscellaneous other provisions.

The law defines the composition of the ELL Task Force. There are nine members, three appointed by the Superintendent of Public Instruction, two appointed by the Governor, two appointed by the President of the Senate, and two appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The members serve a four-year term. They are: Dr. John Baracy, Superintendent, Scottsdale USD; Jim DiCello, Former Asst. Superintendent for Business, Paradise Valley USD; Dr. Eugene Garcia, Vice President for Education Partnerships, ASU; Margaret Garcia Dugan, Deputy Superintendent, Arizona Dept. of Education; Johanna Haver, Author, Teacher; Karen Merritt, ELL Coordinator, Glendale Union HSD; Anna Rosas, Principal, Lincoln Elementary School, Nogales, Nogales USD; Eileen Klein, Public Policy Consultant; and, Alan Maguire, Chairman.

Chairman Maguire stated that the Task Force duties, as prescribed by the law, are, first and foremost, to adopt models of Structured English Immersion for use by Arizona schools. The work done by the Task Force will affect what ELL teachers do. The Task Force also is charged with the responsibilities of establishing a form for SEI budget requests and for reviewing school district and charter school requests for alternative ELL programs. The Task Force also has a secondary responsibility for reviewing the Compensatory Instruction Fund Request Form.

Chairman Maguire said that the law instructed the Task Force, in the development of their SEI models, to consider school size, location, grades, number and percentage of ELL students. The Task Force is required to develop models of Structured English Immersion Programs that are normally not intended to exceed one year and establish the minimum amount of English Language Development (ELD) per day. The statute further states that for the first year of the program, the model shall include a minimum of four hours of English Language Development each day. Four hours of ELD differs from what the Task Force has heard in some of the presentations regarding existing ELL programs. The law also directs the Task Force to develop the most cost efficient models possible that are limited to the regular school year and regular school day. The Task Force is charged to review the models annually and to submit the models to the Governor, President of Senate, Speaker of the House, and the State Board of Education 30 days prior to adoption. Before the SEI models are finalized, they will be reviewed by Joint Legislative Budget Committee.

Chairman Maguire summarized the Task Force progress to date, stating that the Task Force has heard a series of presentations on ELL/SEI programs at schools from around Arizona, expert testimony from Arizona university professors, testimony from national ELL/SEI experts, and presentations on ELL/SEI program components.

The Task Force will be reviewing a compilation document that contains data from the multiple district and school presentations made to the Task Force during the past few months. This giant matrix helps the Task Force to compare different programs in different districts so that existing circumstances are known. Still ahead are additional presentations on ELL/SEI program components, development of SEI model parameters, development of draft models, various reviews of models, adoption of models, and the development of the budget request form to be used by districts to receive funding from Arizona Structured English Immersion Fund.

5. Call to the Public

Mr. Alan Maguire made the call to the public. He set a three- to five-minute limit per speaker so that all who wanted to speak would have the opportunity to address the Task Force.

One of the ELL Task Force members, Dr. John Baracy, asked to speak into the record. Dr. Baracy referred to a guest presenter at a prior Task Force meeting, Dr. Noonan from the Oceanside School District in California, who reported on what appeared to be some significant gains for the year 2000. Dr. Baracy stated that he has read quite a few studies in regards to that school district, and he wanted to enter into the record and have the Task Force have the opportunity to review at a later date, this research that was published from Stanford University. The title is “Inadequate Assessment: What Can SAT-9 Scores Tell Us about the Impact of proposition 227 in California?” (attachment A) After reading this, Dr. Baracy believes that the Task Force did not get the full story and would like to have it entered into record. Mr. Maguire said the study would be copied and distributed to all Task Force members at the next meeting.

The first speaker was Delight Aree Diehn, SEI Coach, Scottsdale Unified School District. Ms. Diehn is also a state-certified SEI trainer and the President of Arizona Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). She said that under the current “one-size-fits-all, sink-or-swim” immersion methodology, the majority of Arizona’s ELL students are making little measurable progress. Ms. Diehn stated that this immersion approach needs to be replaced by a more flexible model, which recognizes clearly the difference between English Language Development and Structured English Immersion. The predominant research-based language acquisition models, supported by language acquisition expert Dr. Stephen Krashen, stressed the need for several years of English Language Development followed by sheltered instruction in the mainstream classroom. Ms. Diehn said that effective models need to take into account both types of programs: ELD and SEI. She stated that the Scottsdale USD supports the approach that provides ELD instruction for English language learners with variations based on the number of ELL students in each school and the percentage of ELL students in each school, their prior education in their first language, and their individual backgrounds. The Scottsdale USD master plan also includes different models for each of the divisions: K-6, middle school, and high school, with flexibility for various configurations based on ELL student English proficiency levels. Ms. Diehn expressed hope that the Scottsdale models can serve as examples which provide flexibility within the framework of offering both English Language Development and Structured English Immersion in order to meet the needs of the ELLs.

The next speakers were Stacie Zanzucchi, ELL staff member of Coconino High School and Kathy Hooker, ELL Coach – district wide, both from the Flagstaff Unified School District. Ms. Zanzucchi stated that Flagstaff has a unique ELL situation: 50% of their ELL students are Native Americans whose home language may not be their indigenous language: it may be English. They are still identified as ELLs and their academic English is sub-standard. Ms. Zanzucchi shared information on a program that is currently being implemented at Coconino High School in Flagstaff, called Intensive English, which is designed to meet the needs of all levels of English language learners. Students who are non-English speaking are in Level 1, but there also are

Levels 2 and 3 that are aligned with both the core academic courses and the ELL proficiency standards. Ms. Zanzucchi explained that the ELL students are on a block schedule of four classes: 50% of their school day is spent in all levels of the Intensive English Program, and the remainder of the day in the mainstream classes. The teachers who are teaching the Intensive English are from both the ELL and the mainstream program. Students are not exited from the Intensive English until they are ready to move completely into the mainstream. They do not impose a limit of one year in the Intensive English Program. Ms. Zanzucchi hoped to share the Flagstaff model with other districts and the Task Force. Details of the Flagstaff USD program are in Attachment B.

Kathy Hooker spoke about the Mt. Elden Middle School Intensive English Program, which has Level 1, 2, and 3. This middle school feeds into Coconino High School. ELLs have a daily two-hour Intensive English time block. The ELLs spend 50% of their day in Intensive English. The framework is identical to the high school Intensive English framework – same levels, same lesson design at middle grade and high school, and consistent strategies. The ELLs in Flagstaff have a seamless transition as they progress from middle grades to high school. Ms. Hooker also asked that the Task Force consider this program. See Attachment B for program details.

The next speaker was Michael Fillerup, also from Flagstaff Unified School District, who said that the needs of ELLs in northern Arizona are vastly different than of those in southern Arizona. He stated that his Congressional District, Congressional District One, has the largest Native American population in the United States. Mr. Fillerup requested that the Task Force take into account the unique situation in Northern Arizona where the vast majority of the ELLs are Native Americans who can participate in mainstream instruction. He said that to require them to participate in a self-contained SEI class with non-English speakers would be not only educationally unsound but a terrible injustice to these children. He requested that the Task Force provide flexibility and latitude in the SEI program models including a mainstream SEI option with coaching support.

Dr. Garcia responded to an earlier comment by stating that the Task Force is not considering a “one-size-fits-all” approach to the SEI models– he stated that the Task Force members have listened very carefully to many presentations and will do everything they can to ensure the ELL students are served well.

Ms. Cindy Segotta-Jones, Director, Curriculum and Instruction, Cartwright Elementary School District, in Phoenix, spoke next, thanking Dr. Garcia for his comments regarding the Oceanside presentation and for presenting the Stanford research, as well as for his comment regarding the Task Force as not a “one-size-fits-all.” Ms. Segotta-Jones asked if Chairman Maguire could present a timeline for the draft SEI models and the review of models at the next Task Force meeting and also the process for draft models. She asked if districts will have the opportunity to review the drafts and provide feedback on them.

The next speaker was Mr. Salvador Gabaldón, representing himself, Oro Valley. Mr. Gabaldón said that it is a relief that the Task Force members understand the difficulty of the task they face

and that they understand the need for flexibility. He offered examples of the diversity and specific issues of the ELL populations: Native American students in northern Arizona, where the need is to preserve endangered languages; refugee students (such as Somalian and Sudanese); and deaf and/or blind ELLs who are attending a school for deaf and blind children. He urged the committee to provide as much flexibility as possible in the SEI models and to support the native language. Mr. Gabaldón would like the models to address the value of the native language, as is stated in SIOP.

Ms. Heather Wilson, ELL Content Specialist, Phoenix USD, was the next speaker. She asked that the Task Force consider the needs of the increasing number of refugee students who arrive in Arizona with no literacy skills in any language. They don't fall into the typical pattern; there is no way that they will be English proficient in two years; they have no reading or writing skills of any sort when they arrive. She said that these students must start learning basic concepts such as counting and that the written word is representing the spoken word, so English proficiency will take a lot longer. Ms. Wilson requested that there be a timeframe attached to district requests for alternate programs (that will differ from the Task Force-approved SEI models) so that students aren't waiting for services

Darwin Stiffler, Associate Superintendent for Curriculum Instruction, Yuma Educational Service Agency (ESD), spoke next and submitted brief written comments. Mr. Stiffler expressed hope that the models identified by the Task Force will be integrated with numerous other programs (i.e., Special Education, Gifted, Reading First, and Vocational Education). He wanted Task Force members to consider how all of the programs must integrate and share time in Arizona's schools. Competing mandates and initiatives are difficult to implement with fidelity. Mr. Stiffler stated that from the field too often it seems that individual programs are built in isolation and that too often the districts end up with silos of kids, and silos of data, and silos of programs. His plea and hope is that this will not happen when the SEI models are developed.

Next, Pamela Batina, Pinal County School Office and ESA, spoke, referencing House Bill 2064, page 11, Lines 41, 42, and 43. (Note: the specific language is in *A.R.S. §15.756.07. Office of English language acquisition services; duties*. The department of education, office of English language acquisition services, shall, ... in consultation with county school superintendents, develop regional programs to enhance all aspects of training for teachers and administrators.) Ms. Batina asked the Task Force to discuss their vision of the role the county superintendents will have in the professional development related to this program and the extent that the county superintendents' offices will be included in the training design. Chairman Alan Maguire stated that because of the open meeting law, he was unable to respond to her question at this time, but he said that her question would be taken back to the Task Force.

Dr. Barbara Valencia-Ortega, Scottsdale USD, spoke about the student language proficiency assessment. She stated that because of delays with Harcourt related to obtaining student test results from the new AZELLA, many school districts were out of compliance with the 30 day assessment requirements. She requested that the Task Force look into this problem. Dr. Valencia-Ortega also stated that there was some good news because it appeared that the districts

would be reimbursed by the State for the \$7.50 per student costs charged. She also raised another concern, knowing that it might not be within the scope of the Task Force: the plight of the ELL student who knows little English and has to sit through the AIMS test. The federal law does allow some flexibility that we don't allow here in Arizona because we are English only. Dr. Valencia-Ortega spoke against the injustice of the AIMS English only assessment for the ELLs.

Ms. Marilyn Sanchez, Creighton ESD, asked the Task Force to consider flexibility. There are districts with schools that have an average of one hundred Kindergarten students and only three or four of the one hundred are English speakers. Ms. Sanchez expressed concern that classrooms set up by levels of English proficiency on a 15 to 1 ratio would be impossible. Ms. Sanchez also stated that their district uses Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), teaching language through the content, using grade-level standards. She stated that they didn't know how they would be able have four hours a day that the children would be segregated by language. Nobody speaks English, except for the three or four English speakers, and she wouldn't know how to have a classroom just for them. Ms. Sanchez raised this concern for the Task Force's consideration.

The final public comments were from Lindsay Stollar, representing Leona Group of Arizona, public charter middle schools and high schools in Arizona. Ms. Stollar stated that they have had some success with the one-year only; they operate on blocks 2 to 3 classes a day 4 to 5 blocks a year. They have already implemented the daily four-hour time blocks for first-year students, and it is working pretty well. Ms. Stollar said that 150 to 200 students in a 900 student high school are English language learners. Her concern is that, when models are developed, the Task Force will keep in mind schools that are a bit different than the typical public high school.

6. Adjournment

Dr. John Baracy moved and Mr. Jim DiCello seconded that the December 14, 2006 ELL Task Force meeting be adjourned. All members approved the motion. The meeting adjourned at 1:52 p.m.

Arizona ELL Task Force

Alan Maguire, Chairman
February 23, 2007